

The Pentagon should open all of its files to independent journalists. I call for a full accounting as soon as possible. Some are saying there's a cover-up in the military. I say it's time to put all the evidence out in the open.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 38 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CARNAHAN) at noon.

PRAYER

The Reverend Dr. Alan Keiran, Senate Chaplain's Office, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

Lord Almighty, the heavens declare Your handiwork, and the majestic beauty of our world shows forth the splendor of Your creation.

We thank You for the unmerited favor You shower upon us each day. We thank You for family, friends, faith, and freedom. Most of all, we thank You for the sacrifice You made to bring us into Your family and give us eternal life.

O God, I pray today for our Nation's representatives, their families, and staffs. Grant them Your favor and wisdom as they pursue righteous ends and seek our Nation's highest good. Continue to equip them for these challenging times. Give them courageous spirits and eternal insights needed in their service to a grateful Nation.

We lift to You our Nation's law enforcement officers and their families, and we thank You for their tireless service. Bless as well our own Capitol Hill Police Department with Your divine blessing and protection.

You alone, O God, are our rock and our redeemer. May You in Your loving providence move in our midst to make Yourself known. I ask all this in the name that is above every name. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SHADEGG) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SHADEGG led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 11, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on May 11, 2007, at 10:01 a.m.:

That the Senate agreed to S. Con. Res. 29.
That the Senate agreed to H. Con. Res. 68.
With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER,
Clerk of the House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

EXTENDING DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE ACCESS ACT OF 1999

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1124) to extend the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1124

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. 5-YEAR REAUTHORIZATION OF TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

(a) PUBLIC SCHOOL PROGRAM.—Section 3(i) of the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999 (sec. 38-2702(i), DC Official Code) is amended by striking “each of the 7 succeeding fiscal years” and inserting “each of the 12 succeeding fiscal years”.

(b) PRIVATE SCHOOL PROGRAM.—Section 5(f) of such Act (sec. 38-2704(f), DC Official Code) is amended by striking “each of the 7 succeeding fiscal years” and inserting “each of the 12 succeeding fiscal years”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1124, the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999, will reauthorize funding for the District of Columbia Tuition Assistance Grant, the DCTAG program, which will help promote higher education for high school graduates in the District of Columbia.

DCTAG provides grants for District high school students to attend public colleges and universities nationwide at in-state tuition rates. Additionally, the bill provides smaller grants for District students to attend private institutions in the D.C. metropolitan area and to attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities nationwide.

The impact of this legislation on the community and in the lives of the students who receive the grants cannot be minimized. DCTAG reaches students and communities where there is no hope of being able to obtain a college education. This is particularly true for many of the students that participate in DCTAG. Fifty-eight percent of the students who participate in the program come from low-income households.

Furthermore, students that participate are attending educational institutions that are known to nurture students of color. Five of the top 10 schools these students attend are HBCUs: Hampton University, Morehouse College, Virginia Union University, St. Augustine's College, and Bennett College.

While students from all races participate in the program and attend over 270 institutions in 47 States, including nationally recognized public institutions like the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, the University of Illinois, the University of California-Berkeley, and Ohio State University, this program serves a community that is lacking resources for students of color from low-income households.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the ranking minority member, Representative TOM DAVIS, and, of course, the distinguished gentlewoman from the District of Columbia for introducing and championing this legislation.

I urge all of my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This bill would simply reauthorize the DCTAG program for an additional 5 years and enable District residents to

continue to attend certain colleges and universities at in-state rates. President Bush, in his budget submission for fiscal year 2008, has included sufficient funds to make this happen. I know that Ranking Member DAVIS, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, and Ms. NORTON have worked very hard to bring this bill to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield such time as she may consume to the author of this legislation, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia, Delegate ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON.

Ms. NORTON. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I certainly thank him for his own hard work and strong support on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of H.R. 1124, the bill that will reauthorize the District of Columbia Access Act of 1999 and extend the District of Columbia Tuition Assistance Grant program, which it authorizes, for an additional 5 years, and, of course, to thank the House for a bill that has afforded higher education to many students who would otherwise have not received it. I especially thank Chairman HENRY WAXMAN and Chairman DANNY DAVIS for facilitating early consideration of this noncontroversial bill on suspension. A very special thanks is particularly due to committee ranking member and co-author TOM DAVIS for his strong and indispensable leadership on this legislation when he was Chair of the full committee and for his continued strong support of DCTAG.

This legislation is already returning unusually large dividends for the Federal investment. DCTAG has increased college attendance of D.C. students by an astonishing 60 percent over 5 years. For the 2005-2006 school year, almost 5,000 students received funding from DCTAG to enroll in 646 universities and colleges in 47 States, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Most of these students are the first in their families to attend college. These documented results represent the city's most important progress toward developing a workforce that can meet the increasing education requirements for employment at average wages in the region. Importantly, this legislation has been instrumental in reversing the steady flight of taxpayers from the District of Columbia, many of whom left the District in order to gain access to lower cost State colleges and universities in the region.

DCTAG acts as a proxy and a substitute for a State university system for the District, which has an open admissions State university, the University of the District of Columbia, but, unlike every State, has no unified system of several colleges and universities. UDC, supported entirely by the city and tuitions of students, is the university of choice for students who must get their education in the District and is itself indispensable to the city, and so much so that I used the op-

portunity provided by this bill to achieve funded historically black college status for the UDC that the city has long sought for its State university because the University of the District of Columbia is one of the oldest Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the United States. As a result, UDC has received an attractive annual HBCU payment since 1999. However, this bill provides higher education access to young people here equivalent to opportunities available in all the States, rather than only one university, and increases the number of choices necessary to meet today's D.C. student population. Maryland and Virginia, for example, each provide more than 30 different college options to residents. DCTAG provides up to \$10,000 annually, which covers State college tuition at most public colleges, or provides up to \$2,500 annually to attend private institutions in the city and region.

DCTAG has enjoyed strong bipartisan support since it was created in 1999. The President has shown his confidence in the program by including \$35 million for DCTAG in his fiscal year 2008 budget request. The D.C. State Education Office deserves special credit for working diligently and successfully since the bill was enacted to maintain a very solid administration of the program. The District has even moved ahead of the curve to foreclose any future funding shortfalls by engaging in careful planning and calculations, measuring expected demand and costs and has made adjustments in offerings accordingly.

We are particularly grateful to business leaders in the region, led by Donald Graham, chairman of The Washington Post, who was instrumental in helping to convince Congress of the necessity for the bill. Mr. GRAHAM and the business leaders did not stop there, however. They established the College Access Program, which we call CAP, to provide additional financial support.

□ 1215

More important, CAP provides essential guidance and encouragement to students as they reach the critical time decision for college. We are also grateful to CAP for supplying a support network that has helped the District's TAG program receive excellent, excellent retention rates. For example, of the 1,091 DCTAG freshmen in 2001-2002, 72 percent returned as sophomores; of that, 79 percent returned as juniors; 82 percent as seniors, and 77 percent of the seniors graduated. This, I am sure Members recognize, is very enviable retention in college graduate rates compared with others around the country.

CAP's 100 percent private funding by business leaders, most from the region, not from the city, is nothing less than a vote of confidence in DCTAG that I believe is warranted by the legislation's documented results.

It is difficult to think of congressional legislation that has brought

such immediate and positive results, or that is more appreciated by D.C. residents. To be sure, our D.C. homebuyer and business tax credits, unique to the District and reauthorized again last year, have had similar measurable and documented effects on increasing homeownership and keeping taxpaying residents and businesses in a city without a State tax base that instead must itself carry many State costs. However, if there are to be homeowners and taxpayers in the District of Columbia in the 21st century, many more of them must have college training.

The economy of this Federal city will always be tied to Federal jobs and jobs related to Federal jobs at the high end. The stability of the Federal sector here has been indispensable to many aspects of the city's economy, but too few of the public and private sector jobs go to District residents. For example, the District continues to be a virtual job machine for the region. The District created 8,500 jobs in the last 12 months, but its unemployment rate remains almost twice the rate in this region. This disparity represents an education and training mismatch that must be eliminated to assume a decent future for the city's young residents.

H.R. 1124 is one of the District's top priorities this year because of the program's proven benefits to the economy of the city and region, and especially to the city's residents and families. Families have been willing to make the necessary sacrifices to meet the costs of large annual increases in State tuition nationwide, even though the amount they receive from TAG has not increased at all and remains a maximum \$10,000 annually, and this despite the modest family incomes of most of our students.

This immensely successful and popular higher education program has proven itself over and over again. It would be difficult, indeed, to think of a program that has returned so much to the city and the Federal Government for the modest amount of Federal funding. Of any measure that I will bring before the House this year, H.R. 1124 certainly ranks near the top in deserving continuing support.

I appreciate the strong bipartisan support and the support of the President of the United States that this vital Federal educational assistance program has received, and I ask for the continued support of the House. I believe the results fostered by the program have earned the support.

I strongly urge approval of 1124.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, simply to close, let me just suggest that with more than 500,000 individuals who live in the District of Columbia, and they've only got one public institution of higher education, the University of the District of Columbia, one could really say that this program provides a level of equity that is a level playing field, and somewhat equal opportunity given the fact that it is not

a State. For the young people who live in the District, it is an excellent program. I would urge all of my colleagues to vote in favor of it.

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I've traveled a long road with the District of Columbia Access Act—from March 1, 1999, when it was introduced, until the present day.

That road took us through the predecessor subcommittee I chaired at the time, to the full Government Reform Committee, to the House and Senate floor, and then to the White House, where then-President Clinton signed the measure on November 12, 1999.

In all of its legislative approvals the College Access Act—also known as the Tuition Assistance Grant Program—was passed unanimously, by voice vote. President Clinton had included sufficient money in his budget submission that year, and a statement of administration policy endorsed the approach we had taken in authorizing use of those funds.

I am deeply proud of our hard, bipartisan effort in enacting this measure and in reauthorizing it 2 years ago.

My thanks to ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, who was ranking member of the District of Columbia Subcommittee in 1999, and who has worked tirelessly to enhance this legislation ever since.

I would also like to thank my then-counterpart in the Senate, GEORGE VOINOVICH, for his continuing support, and Senators WARNER and DURBIN for working with us to improve this legislation.

I'm also grateful to my namesake Chairman DANNY DAVIS, chairman of the subcommittee, for holding a hearing on this bill March 22, ranking subcommittee member KENNY MARCHANT for his support, and Chairman WAXMAN for marking this bill up so expeditiously.

The 5-year reauthorizing legislation before us today will enable District residents to continue to attend colleges and universities at in-State rates. President Bush, in his budget submission for fiscal year 2008, has included sufficient funds to make this happen.

Then-Mayor Anthony Williams and now D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty have both strongly supported this law as being very important for District high school graduates. The Tuition Assistance Program has doubled the total number of District students attending college since 1999–2000, the school year before the program started. We have incentivized getting a college education.

This law is a classic “leveling of the playing field.” No city or county in the country is required to supplement in-State rates with local funds, and neither should the taxpayers in the Nation's capital be saddled with this burden. Neither should the city be penalized for its own success in administering this program.

Back on March 4, 1999, when I first introduced this bill, I went to nearby Eastern High School with Ms. NORTON. I was deeply moved by the reaction of the students. I will never forget how so many took our hands, looked into our eyes, and thanked us for introducing the original bill.

I'm proud of all we have been able to do in the Nation's capital since 1995, when the city was literally bankrupt. Economic development, public safety, the real estate market, and so many other aspects of city life have changed for the better.

But nothing has given me more satisfaction than working to improve educational oppor-

tunity. Fighting for equal educational opportunity is one of the reasons I entered public life.

We need a healthy city to have a healthy Washington region.

Reauthorizing this law, which has expanded higher educational choices, is a strong part of our vision for the future.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1124.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF A NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR MURDER VICTIMS

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 223) supporting the goals and ideals of a National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 223

Whereas the death of a loved one is a devastating experience, and the murder of a loved one is exceptionally difficult;

Whereas the friends and families of murder victims cope with grief through a variety of support services, including counseling, crisis intervention, professional referrals, and assistance in dealing with the criminal justice system; and

Whereas the designation of a National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims on September 25th of each year provides an opportunity for the people of the United States to honor the memories of murder victims and to recognize the impact on surviving family members: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of a National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims; and

(2) recognizes the significant benefits of the organizations that provide services to the loved ones of murder victims.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleague in the consideration of H. Res. 223, which supports the goals of a National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims.

H. Res. 223, which has 59 cosponsors, was introduced by Representative JOHN SHADEGG from Arizona on March 7, 2007. H. Res. 223 was reported from the Oversight Committee on May 1, 2007 by a voice vote.

Mr. Speaker, in 2005, there were 16,692 murders and nine negligent manslaughters reported in our Nation. This is obviously too many murders. And so I support the National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims and recognize all organizations that provide services, such as support, guidance and counseling, to the loved ones and friends of murder victims.

It is important that this day is not just a remembrance of those who tragically lost their lives, but a call to action. While some of us have not experienced acts of violence, we share responsibility to people who have lost their loved ones to murder. We should always reflect the moral virtues of respect and caring and sharing with one another, regardless of one's race, creed and national origin.

Of course, we remember the recent incidents that have just occurred at the university in Virginia. I also remember in my own neighborhood, where just last week a young man was killed on a bus. He turned out to be an absolute hero because he actually put himself in front of another student who was about to be shot. And of course that community and that family still grieves. So I urge that we all remember murder victims and their families by getting involved in our homes, communities, schools and businesses to prevent violence.

Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague, Representative SHADEGG from Arizona, for seeking to honor the memories of murder victims and recognize the impact on surviving family members.

I urge swift passage of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

With the recent tragedy of Virginia Tech fresh in our minds, we take this time to remember the many victims of needless violence in our country.

The devastation of families, victims and entire communities in which these tragedies occur is beyond calculation. Too often, victims' loved ones are left alone with their loss and feel overwhelmed with the devastating experience that has altered their lives forever.